

***Claim Status***

Claims 29, 30, 33-46, 49-62 and 65-73 are pending.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claim 29, 30, 33-46, 49-62 and 65-73 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hochberg et al (US 2005/0055518) in view of Burgess (US 2002/0156936) and further in view of McIntosh (US 6,185,576).

Regarding claim 29, 45, 61, 73, Hochberg discloses:

receiving a request, from the host, to delete a unit of data stored on the storage system

[Hochberg, Fig 8, step 230, receive request to delete an object]

in response to the request, determining whether a previously-defined retention period for the unit of data has expired:

[Hochberg, Fig 8, step 246, does current time minus retention period start/exceed retention period]

Hochberg discloses the elements of the claimed invention as noted above but does not disclose retrieving first information associated with the unit of data. Burgess discloses retrieving first information associated with the unit of data [Burgess, paragraph 58, Fig 6, claims 1, 5, 6, 7, 8].

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It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Hochberg to include retrieving first information associated with the unit of data as taught by Burgess for the purpose of controlling data flow throughout the communication system [abstract].

The combination of Hochberg and Burgess discloses the elements of the claimed invention as noted above but does not disclose that identifies second information specifying the previously-defined retention period for the unit of data. McIntosh discloses that identifies second information specifying the previously-defined retention period for the unit of data [McIntosh, col 2, lines 60-65, col 3, lines 35-40, col 4, lines 40-50, col 6, lines 5-20, Table II, col 6, line 65-col 19, line 25, col 20, lines 30-35, col 21, lines 5-25, col 22, lines 15-25, col 31, lines 50-65, claim 1]. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the above combination of references to include that identifies second information specifying the previously-defined retention period for the unit of data as taught by McIntosh for the purpose of selective and timely purging of documents wherein the first information is separate from the second information and includes information identifying a retention class to which the unit of data belongs [Burgess, paragraph 58, Fig 6, claims 1, 5, 6, 7, 8] wherein the second information is the previously-defined retention period for the retention class that defines a period of time during which units of data belonging to the retention class cannot be deleted from and/or modified on the at least one storage system,

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[McIntosh, col 2, lines 60-65,col 3, lines 35-40, col 4, lines 40-50,col 6, lines 5-20, Table II, col 6, line 65-col 19, line 25, col 20, lines 30-35, col 21, lines 5-25, col 22, lines 15-25,col 31, lines 50-65, claim 1]

and wherein that at least one storage system stores a record associating the retention period with the retention class

[McIntosh, col 2, lines 60-65,col 3, lines 35-40, col 4, lines 40-50,col 6, lines 5-20, Table II, col 6, line 65-col 19, line 25, col 20, lines 30-35, col 21, lines 5-25, col 22, lines 15-25,col 31, lines 50-65, claim 1]

using the first information and the record stored on the at least one storage system to retrieve the second information specifying the previously defined retention period for the unit of data

[Burgess, paragraph 58, Fig 6, claims 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, McIntosh, col 2, lines 60-65,col 3, lines 35-40, col 4, lines 40-50,col 6, lines 5-20, Table II, col 6, line 65-col 19, line 25, col 20, lines 30-35, col 21, lines 5-25, col 22, lines 15-25,col 31, lines 50-65, claim 1]

when it is determined that the retention period for the unit of data has not expired, denying the request to delete the unit of data

[Hochberg, paragraph 24, retention period has not expired, request to remove object is denied]

Note: First information and second information are interpreted per applicant's Remarks filed 11/23/2009. First information = class identifier, second information = retention period.

Regarding claim 30, 46, 62, the combination of Hochberg, Burgess and McIntosh discloses further comprising deleting the unit of data when it is determined that the retention period for the unit of data has expired [Hochberg, paragraph 30]

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Regarding claim 33, 49, 68, the combination of Hochberg, Burgess and McIntosh discloses receiving, at the at least one storage system, a second request from the at least one host, requesting that the at least one storage system modify the retention period of the retention class [Hochberg, paragraph 23]

Regarding claim 34, 50, 65, the combination of Hochberg, Burgess and McIntosh discloses wherein the second request is a request to reduce the retention period of the retention class [Hochberg, paragraph 22]

Regarding claim 35, 51, the combination of Hochberg, Burgess and McIntosh discloses wherein the second request is a request to increase the retention period of the retention class [Hochberg, paragraph 23]

Regarding claim 36, 52, the combination of Hochberg, Burgess and McIntosh discloses modifying the second information specifying the retention period in response to the second request [Hochberg, paragraph 23]

Regarding claim 37, 53, the combination of Hochberg, Burgess and McIntosh discloses the second information is modified without modifying the content of the unit of data [Hochberg, paragraph 23, 24]

Regarding claim 38, 54, 66, the combination of Hochberg, Burgess and McIntosh discloses wherein the second request includes an event command indicating the occurrence of an event [Hochberg paragraph 23]

Regarding claim 39, 55, 67, the combination of Hochberg, Burgess and McIntosh discloses wherein the event command does not specify the manner in which the retention period of the retention class is to be reduced, and wherein determining the manner of reducing the retention

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period of the retention class by referring to information stored within or accessible to the storage system [Hochberg, paragraphs 23, 24]

Regarding claim 40, 56, 68, 79, the combination of Hochberg, Burgess and McIntosh discloses wherein the second request specifies the manner in which the length of the retention period of the retention class is to be reduced [Hochberg, paragraph 22]

Regarding claim 41, 57, 69, the combination of Hochberg, Burgess and McIntosh discloses receiving the second request includes determining whether the retention period for the retention class is permitted to be reduced; reducing the retention period only when the retention period for the retention class is permitted to be reduced [Hochberg, paragraph 24]

Regarding claim 42, 58, 70, the combination of Hochberg, Burgess and McIntosh discloses determining whether the retention period for the retention class is permitted to be reduced includes determining whether the retention period of the retention class is designated as capable of being reduced [Hochberg, paragraph 24]

Regarding claims 43, 59, 71, the combination of Hochberg, Burgess and McIntosh discloses wherein determining whether the retention period of the retention class is designated as capable of being reduced by examining the retention period [Hochberg, paragraphs 23 and 24]

Regarding claim 44, 60, 72, the combination of Hochberg, Burgess and McIntosh discloses determining whether the retention period of the retention class is designated as capable of being reduced by examining a flag associated with the retention class [Hochberg, paragraph 31]

### ***Response to Arguments***

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Applicant's arguments filed 11/23/2009 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Etienne P. LeRoux whose telephone number is (571) 272-4022. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday, 8:00 am - 4:30 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Apu Mofiz can be reached on (571) 272-4080. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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/Etienne P LeRoux/  
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 2161

1/6/2010